

AMERICANS IN KIEV SEE YOUTH CHIEFS

Their Discussion Illustrates
Problems of East and West
in Exchange of Ideas

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The vodka and cognac were set out in generous portions and good fellowship had reached the point of one chorus: "I've been working on the railroad."

"Here is to Soviet tourist visits to the United States!" toasted the Americans. "Here's to the free flow of ideas and news! May our countries live side by side as flags stand now on the table!"

"Here is to truth in reporting!" answered the Ukrainians.

The three Americans who engaged in these toasts, while passing through here yesterday on a trip to observe the current Soviet election campaign, comprise the first avowedly political delegation to the Soviet Union.

Members of the delegation are Prof. Richard Scammon of the Governmental Affairs Institute; Prof. Cyril E. Black, Professor of History at Princeton University, and Hedley W. Donovan, managing editor of the magazine Fortune.

Study Election Methods

Besides Kiev, they are touring Leningrad, Stalingrad, Tiflis and Tashkent, studying the Communist party's organization of next Sunday's single-state election and interviewing officials about current events.

Yesterday afternoon they were taken to the spacious headquarters of the Ukrainian Young Communist League (Komsomol). An earnest articulate man of 35, Nikolai K. Kirichenko, a First Secretary of the Ukrainian Komsomol, faced them from the end of a long table bedecked with fresh apples, mineral water and cigarettes. Around the table sat the Americans' entourage and the young men and women who lead the youth organization.

In describing the group's work Mr. Kirichenko noted that it had recruited thousands of volunteers to build mines in the Donets coal basin. He spoke of 80,000 volunteers who had been sent from the Ukraine to settle Bahrain lands in Asia and of the 100,000 who will soon be sent to distant cattle farms and still others who are to be sent to steel mills.

Americans Show Interest

The Americans showed great interest in these resettlements of youths aged 18 to 30. They were told that the mine enlistments were only for one year but that in any case the vast majority of all the youths stayed in the jobs to which they were sent. Mr. Kirichenko said they received the same pay as regular workers.

Then the Americans asked about the volunteering procedure.

"We are offended," said Mr. Kirichenko politely, "at suggestions from abroad of compulsion in our program. Our young people are enthusiastic about helping their country. The enthusiasm for some projects was so great that we could not cope with the number of volunteers. They must make applications and we choose from them."

Practical Experience Urged

When the Americans asked whether it was true that a year's farm or factory work was now mandatory for admission to universities, Mr. Kirichenko said that young people should have two or three years' practical experience before going on to higher schools. Students only profit from contact with working men and their problems, he added.

When the visitors asked discreetly about the relationship of the Komsomol to the Communist party, Mr. Kirichenko straightened up and declared:

"Komsomols consider it an honor to work under the direction of the party. We are proud of this and never conceal it."

The Americans had to explain the United States system. The Komsomol leaders wanted to know how youth was "organized" in the United States and whether it had adequate representation in Congress. They wanted to know how many "workers" were in Congress.

The Americans said members of Congress were much more comparable to the full-time Soviet party leaders than to the legislators of the Supreme Soviet, who come to Moscow two or three times a year to approve the government's program.

They added that Americans did not look at their society as composed of workers, peasants and the intelligentsia as do the Russians. They also pointed out that without a national youth organization young men do well in politics and that one, Richard M. Nixon, became Vice President when only two years older than Mr. Kirichenko.

The Ukrainian hosts found it difficult to believe that members of Congress had to work full time and did not simply approve what the Administration proposed. Ukrainians asked again who "speaks" for youth and they seemed convinced that labor was politically disowned in the United States.

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